

**A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF FREE WRITING TO
TEACHING WRITING**

Elda Fanisa Putri¹, Tri Kurniawati², Ageung Darajat³

¹IKIP PGRI Pontianak, eldafanisa88@gmail.com

²IKIP PGRI Pontianak, trikurniawati.ikip@gmail.com

³IKIP PGRI Pontianak, ageungdarajat@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out the contribution of free writing technique to teaching writing. A systematic review method was applied in this research. The subject of this research was five studies selected by inclusion and exclusion criteria. This research reviewed five published selected studies related to free writing technique in teaching writing from year 2010 to 2018. The researcher founds the related studies (journals) manually by using search engine google scholar with keywords searching “Free Writing technique” to find the journals and using zotero software as a tool to collect and select the journals. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data. The research findings showed that freewriting technique contributes helps students to overcome fears of making mistakes in writing, release inner tension, reduce students’ writing anxiety, facilitate the students to focus in generating and exploring the ideas, make the students enjoyed the activity, and beneficial for learning English. Last but not least, free writing increase the students speed of writing and flow of thought. Moreover, it increase students’ writing fluency, improve students’ writing confidence.

Keywords : *Free Writing, Systematic Review, Writing*

INTRODUCTION

In learning English, there are four languages skills to be learned. There are speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Those skills are related to each other. From the four basic skills writing is one of important skill which has very complex activity. Writing is a process organizing the idea, feelings, and opinions into written form. It is a complex activity with the control language both of the sentences level such as grammatical, structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, later information and beyond sentence ranking that integrates information into a coherent paragraph.

In writing many of students might express their ideas, feelings, thoughts, desires and experiences written to the readers, but there are also the students who cannot express them in written form. According to Richards & Renandya (2002: 303), writing is the most difficult skill for foreign learners to master. It is because writing is considered as a complex process of putting ideas on the paper to transform ideas or thoughts into words. Since the thoughts or ideas is an abstract thing which comes from our mind, it is not easy

to transform it into understandable or readable form (Brown, 2001: 336). It means that writing is important in teaching and learning English because learning English can be useless if the students do not know how to write in English.

In making a good writing there are several elements of writing including vocabulary, grammar, and paragraph organization. These things are very important to be mastered in supporting writing in order to produce a good writing. Considering those elements of writing there are several obstacles that happen to the university student based on the fifth journals that has been read by the researcher in producing good writing. Those obstacles are lack of material or knowledge to write, lack of vocabulary in making writing, lack of ability to organize paragraph, lack of confidence for choosing a topic and developing the ideas. In addition, the students also low in grammar, difficult to start writing, and difficult to build and develop their imagination into written form.

In order to solve the students' problem above, Free Writing technique may be a solution that can be useful to improve students' writing skill to university students. Free writing technique is an important technique in helping students to express themselves by writing, and it is expected to give students a great start or an introduction to write. It is supported by Bello (1997: 4), who stated that one-way to improve the writing skill is to practice. In this case, the practice can be conducted in form of free writing activity. Whatever the students write about, it is easy to start although the students write about their experience or short story or telling story. The important one is they could start to write. Elbow (1998: 14), found that this free writing activity can help students learn simply to get on writing and not be held by worries about whether they use good words or right words. Free writing is a writing technique that makes students write whatever comes into their mind without stopping, worrying about grammar, spelling, organization or even making basic sense. The main goal of free writing is to get something on the page

In the journals searching, the researcher found lots of journals which applied Free Writing technique to improve students' writing skills. All of the journals implied that Free writing technique is effective to solve students' difficulties in writing. For instance, there is one of the journal implemented by Li (2007) entitled "Exploring the Use of Focused Free Writing in Developing Academic Writing". The result of this journals show that Free writing has been used as a powerful technique to facilitate students understanding the nature and the process of academic writing in order to have more confidence in writing. This made the researcher want to review the journals related to Free Writing technique.

In this research, the researcher selects, synthesizes, and summarizes all research findings of the journals that matched the effect and the application of Free writing technique to present new findings from other previous experts' research. A systematic review would discuss published information in a particular subject area within a certain time period. It addresses new or emerging topics that would benefit from a holistic conceptualization and synthesis of the literature (Ramdhani *et al*, 2014). As the result, the researcher would present the systematic review of the previous studies related to the free writing technique in teaching writing in period 2010 to 2019.

METHOD

The method adopted conduct the systematic review is based on six steps proposed by (Fernandez *et al*, 2016). According to them, the six steps are defining the research question, establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, search strategy for identification of literature, reviewing the process and evaluating the studies, synthesizing and analyzing data. The first step of the procedure is constructing the research question based on the problems of the research which should be identified clearly. The question should be structured well, the researcher used PICOS tool to to guide the researcher to make a research question. After the questions are identified, the researcher establish the inclusion and exclusion criteria adapted(Alsowat, H.H, 2017:34) to select the appropriate journals in to be reviewed systematically. The next steps is search strategy for identification of literature. In this step, The researcher used search engine like google scholar that could include scanning the tables of contents of key journals in the field or looking at important papers related to the topic and searching their references list for other relevants sources. After finishing the search strategy, the researcher found that there 16 related journals based on the keywords searching. Those journals were published from the year 2010 to 2018. The studies were collected to zotero as the tool of data selection. This tool aimed to collect and select the journals by using inclusion criteria and the researcher found 5 related journals. The included studies were published in database such as, journals of English language Teaching Society (ELTS), Social Humaniora, Voices of English Language Education Society (VELES), and European Centre for Research Training and Development Uk.

The relevant studies that have been selected by inclusion criteria process systematically identified the information from each study that is used to answer the research question. This information included the characteristic of the studies details of title, author, sample, country,

and research design. The last step of systematic review is synthesizing and analyzing data. The researcher used thematic analysis to synthesize and summarize the qualitative result from five included studies in terms of evidence collected using thematic analysis method to interpret the data.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Applying Free Writing as a Technique for Developing Kazakhstani University Students Writing Skill in English.

Madina Tussupbekova And Peter Enders (2015)

The process approach is important to generate and organize ideas according to the palm or topic. This is the first stage in process of free writing. This stage give the description of practical activities of free writing. Those activities are generating the ideas by choosing the topic consideration within the group, extending the ideas into notes, organizing the ideas in the form of keywords, composing consecutive sentences using the keywords, writing the first draf without carring for spelling and grammar, exchanging the drf, reading the texts the other students and giving feedback to them, draf are returtn and students improve their free writing according their feedback, writing the final draf and giving the texts to the teacher for a last feedback. In the process approach, considerable freedom is given for free writing ss there is not the usual need to strictly follow lexical and grammar rules. This considerably facilitates to begin with the writing.

In order to determine is the efficiency of free writing to develop writing skill, the researcher conduct free writing technique over a period of 15 weeks. Before starting, the researcher explain the free writing process. In this study, the prompts are focused topic, keywords and consencutive sentences. The prompt enable the students to concentrate on writing in define time. The next steps includes writing activities in which the students work in groups to generate ideas about the focused topic. Next, the students works on its own to create the first draf, concentrating on the focused topic and not worrying spelling and grammar. Then, the students shre their ideas with groupmates, like peer review. This encourages the students to edit their groupmates' writing based on their own language skills to some extent and generates new ideas.

The qualitative analysis is based on the students' free writing notes. Within 15 weeks the students are required to write weekly only on the focused topic assigned by the university curriculum. Every week students paper are proofread by the teacher, who

provides the students with feedback. Finally, the texts are collected and saved for analysis. In order to analyze the results of writing skills, the number of keywords and consecutive sentences are counted in count tables and graphs. The majority of students are able to use approximately 20 keywords in 15 sentences in their free writing.

Collaborative process is the final stage of free writing, where students share their free writing texts with their groupmates and the teacher. This leads to a peculiar process of collaborative work. It is also worth mentioning that the collaborative process yields a real product of the study. The texts are shared and discussed in a manner that is not typical for teaching at schools or universities. This study confirmed that free writing contributes to helping students overcome fears of making mistakes, to express ideas openly, to release inner tensions, and to improve writing skills.

2. The Quality of University Students' Writing Under Free Writing Technique

Authors : La Dunifa, Jafar Ahiri, and Edy Karno (2017)

Several benefits of using freewriting technique in teaching writing (1) freewriting makes writing easier by helping the students with the root psychological or existential difficulty in writing like finding words and putting them down on a blank piece of paper (2) free writing is the best way to learn to separate the producing process from the revising process (3) free writing is a good way to warm up to be effective time and help students find words easily (4) freewriting is a useful outlet of feelings and (5) freewriting is one of the alternative techniques to improve students' writing performance. Free writing technique is divided into two types; they are: (1) unfocused free writing: the writer chooses the topic and is free to shift from subject to subject often this is used to generate ideas for a piece of writing on any topic of the writer's choice; (2) focused free writing: the writer focuses attention on a specific subject, often in response to an assigned task and focused free writing is often used in the classrooms. Free writing activities enable students to try out their language in a freer way.

In writing there are some problems that usually happen to the students. Regarding to the students' problem in writing, students of English Education Study Program of Danayu Ikhsanuddin University, even though the students have had some courses focused on writing (Basic Writing, Writing 1, Writing 2, and Writing 3), however, the facts show that the quality of their writing (i.e., writing project, research report) is still unsatisfied. The products they produce are difficult to understand since the works are full of illogical, ambiguity, and run-on sentences. Most students of this

program have low writing performance. The students either think or say that they do not want to write. This may be because of they lack confidence, think it is boring or believe they have 'nothing to say'.

When applied the free writing technique the researchers gave a free writing exercises which was consisted of two cycles to measure students' writing achievement and the researchers also gave the interview to dig up students' perception regarding to the application of free writing technique. Free writing exercises give the students more opportunity to do writing practice. As a warm-up activity, free writing is designed to provide language, ideas, and encouragement to students before they get used to the writing itself and free writing exercises can also be developed students' writing habit. After applying the free writing technique, students' improvement in writing and students' perception is positive. There were several students' improvement in writing through the implementation of free writing technique such as students' writing quality and students' writing performance can be improved significantly, students get words in paper easily, students have a self confidence and students' anxiety in writing was reduced. Then the researchers gave the interview to know about the students perception regarding to the application of free writing technique. The perception of some students about the application of free writing which basically can be summarized in the main points; they are (1) the technique is helpful because it can reduce their writing anxiety (2) the technique is effective since it makes them focus their attention without any pressure (3) they are free to explore their idea without worry of making mistakes and making bad grade; (4) it is fun because they can flow their idea freely; (5) it is motivated because all of the class member have to come up with their own writing; and (6) it is more practical because it can train their writing skill regularly. This research showed that free writing technique contributes to reduce students' writing anxiety, facilitates learners to focus in exploring their idea, and motivate the students because this free writing is a practice technique to train students' writing skill regularly and students' perception toward the implementation of free writing are positive.

3. Increases in Writing Fluency through Free-Writing

Author: Shiobara (2014)

This study aim to investigate the changes of students in writing fluency for one semester in a writing class using freewriting. By introducing timed free writing into the classroom the researcher wants to improve students' writing fluency and also increase

their confidence in writing skills. The researcher guides students with the writing process. From this point of view the researcher introduces the topic, which then leads to a more controlled teaching.

In free writing, the students do not focus on the tension they wrote, after receiving instruction they have a body of work that they can rewrite. Then the researcher gave the task. In this class, all students are given a written journal, with topics determined by the teacher each week. The first five minutes involve a quick mind map of ideas. It is written on the opposite page of the writing page, so it can be used as a reference when writing. During this time students can use their dictionary and seek advice from the teacher. When students start writing, the time is right for five minutes. They cannot use a dictionary and are encouraged to write as much as possible. The researcher gives students a full page with lines to write about. Very few students write more than half a page, it is important for students to feel that they have as much space to write as they can.

The researcher found that students' writing confidence increased as seen in discussion quotes. Part of the increase in writing length may be due to familiarity with the process, this increase due to increased fluency, and especially acceptance on the part of students to try to write rather than think too deeply. The researcher also found that students enjoyed these activities, and felt the benefits for their English learning. In the final class, the researcher asked students how they felt about freewriting. Even though it is a face-to-face discussion, so that students may feel inhibited from criticizing the activity, their responses are very positive. As a class activity writing was a great success. Successful free writing helps students improve writing fluency and self-confidence in writing.

4. Free Writing versus Writing Fluency

Author: Divya Jhon (2019)

The study evaluated six freewriting activities performed in an English classroom for first-year engineering students over four consecutive weeks. Students recognize that free writing increases their writing speed and flow of thought. In fact, the students were surprised that they could write so much in such a short amount of time.

Some students' perceptions after using free writing. Some students admit that the non-editing part is the interesting part of fact-free writing which causes their writing speed to increase, the rules in free writing are quite interesting, there is no need to worry about grammar mistakes, free writing is one of the best and wonderful experiences, make

i feel comfortable and relaxed. The advantages of free writing include helping to increase one's writing speed. In addition, it also helps students hone their thoughts, think quickly, write words to form sentences and write simultaneously. Students demonstrate different levels of fluency according to the type of assignment given. The two graphs displayed support the finding that the activity allowed students to increase the number of words written per minute, thereby increasing their writing fluency. The two graphs of this study show that the shorter the time required for free writing, the greater the number of words produced.

The emphasis of writing fluency lies on the quantity of words produced and not on the quality of the final product. Students' writing fluency has improved. For the 5 minute freewriting assignment, students produced 39 and 34 words per minute for the 5 minute freewriting assignment. In general, the free writing assignment developed the students' writing fluency activities after the activity. These activities allow students to increase the number of words written per minute, thereby increasing their writing fluency and the shorter the time required for free writing, the greater the number of words produced. The emphasis of writing fluency lies on the quantity of words produced and not on the quality of the final product.

5. The Influence of Freewriting On Writing Fluency and Confidence of Efl College-Level Students

Author: Hwang (2010)

This study aims to investigate three important areas for the field of foreign language writing: (a) to examine the effect of practicing guided free writing on the English fluency of EFL college level students; (b) to observe whether there is a fluency benefit from practicing free guided writing that transfers to general writing fluency; and (c) to illustrate how practicing guided free writing helps increase students' confidence in writing English.

During the study, a total of 208 samples of guided freewriting written by eight college-level EFL students over an eight week period were analyzed in terms of fluency in words per minute to measure writing fluency, and the results were analyzed using one repeated measures one way anova test. Then the result of students' pretest and posttest writings were compared in terms of fluency that measured from words per minute by performing a paired sample t-test, and the same pretest and posttest writings were also be assessed for quality to observe whether the benefits of fluency in free writing were

transferred to new posts carried out in context. This English for academic purpose, where the pressure for feedback and judgment usually exists. The survey results were analyzed using descriptive statistics to investigate how students perceive free writing in terms of increasing their confidence in their written English.

The results showed that the guided free writing exercise for eight weeks had a statistically significant effect in increasing students' writing fluency. In addition, it was found that the increase in writing fluency may have transferred to other writing undertaken in this EAP context, where students had more pressure to write due to feedback or assessment. Most of students agreed that practicing free guided writing had a positive effect on their confidence in writing English. This study shows that a short period of practicing guided freewriting helps improve EFL college level students' English writing fluency and their confidence

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research is to find out and review the contribution of free writing in teaching writing skill. The contribution of free writing technique helped the student to overcome their difficulties in writing in order to create a good writing. Based on the analyze that have been done by the researcher, the five journals showed that free writing is a technique that has many contribution to students to improve writing skill.

After analyzing the journals, the researcher found the result findings related to the five studies that have been reviewed in this research. It showed that free writing technique contributes in teaching writing to improve students' writing skill it helps students to overcome fears of making mistakes, release inner tensions, reduce students' writing anxiety, facilitates learners to focus in generating and exploring their idea. Moreover, it helps increase the students' writing influency. This is relevant to the results of the study conducted by Li (2007) stated that freewriting can be a powerful tool engage students in continual writing practice through with the students enhanced their understanding of the nature and process of academic writing; they become more aware of personal strengths and difficulties in writing, and thus developed more confidence in academic writing. In accordance with this conclusion, Rosenberg (1989: 74) believes that freewriting is a useful strategy that can help students generate material to write about.

In addition, students' perception concerning to the application of free writing, such as the technique is helpful because it can reduce their writing anxiety, the technique is effective since it makes them focus their attention without any pressure, they are free to

explore their idea without afraid of making mistakes and making bad grade, it is fun because they can flow their idea freely, it is motivated because all of the class member have to come up with their own writing; and it is more practical because it can train their writing skill regularly. Most of the students enjoy the free writing assigent and appreciate their own success. Moreover, the students perception that free writing very helpful in improving their writing skills and enriching their vocabulary.

The result conveyed that the fifth journals have similarities result. The fifth journals talked about the succesful of free writing technique that is free writing succses in developing or improving studens writing skills in teaching writing. Even though, it showed students problem while using free writing teachnique for instance when the teacher give the students writing test which was post test 1 after the application of free writing technique, there were relatively any improvement on students' writing performance compared to pre-test, however, it still does not meet the indicator of the successfulness stipulated (75.00) basis point. Therefore, the implementation of the technique still needs to be continued to cycle 2. It means the students writing still unsatisfied. At the end of the post-test 2, there is any significant increase of the students and it already meet the indicator of the successfulness (75.00) basis point. Therefore, the implementation of free writing technique in improving students' writing quality is successful.

One the other hand, each studies had differences procedures. In the first study 'Applying Free Writing as a Technique for Developing Kazakstani University Students' Writing Skill in English'. It focuses on four stage process first is process approach, this process is give the description of practical activities. Where the students allow to generate and organize ideas according to the plan or topic. Second is process development, this process is required to do the draft of free writing as well as determine keywords and amount of consecutive senntences. Third is qualitative analysis, this process means to collect the data for research and to evaluate the efficiency of fre writing using graps, table and questionnaire. Fourth is collaborative process, this process is where the teacher and the students read another group's work and give the feedback in order to break isolation of writing and to learn from others. Meanwhile, second study is 'The Quality of University Students' Writing Under Free Writing Technique' and third study is 'Increases in Writing Fluency through Free Writing Journals' It did not explained to the students the procedure of free writing technique in writing. It only showed the instruments used to

collect data and the result. Fourth study is 'Free Writing versus Writing Fluency' this study did not explained the procedures of free writing, the students just given six free writing activities in synchrony with the syllabus, were completed in the English classes to enable the students learn the art of free writing. Fifth study is 'The Influence of Free Writing on Writing Fluency and Confidence of EFL College Level Students'. the procedure are the teacher explained to the students what is free writing technique, then the students given severals minutes to do free writing on a given topic, and the teacher did analysis survey as the feedback to the students task.

CONCLUSION

A systematic review is a proper method for a researcher who wants to conduct new research in a systematic process which involves identifying, selecting, and summarizing the previous research to analyze any gaps of that research and turn it into new findings of a particular topic.

In conducting a systematic review, the researcher has done some steps of systematic review procedure namely the research question, establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, search strategy for identification of literature, reviewing the process and evaluating the studies, synthesizing and analyzing data. This systematic review in this research has included five studies in published journal form. The researcher founds the related studies (journals) manually by using search engine google scholar with keywords searching " Free Writing technique" to find the journals and using zotero software as a tool to process and select the journals. The fifth studies discovered the use of free writing technique in teaching writing. Based on the findings of this research, the use of free writing technique in teaching writing was succeeded to improve the students' writing skill.

The result of overall five journals revealed that free writing technique contributes helps students to overcome fears of making mistakes in writing, release inner tension, reduce students' writing anxiety, facilitate the students to focus in generating and exploring the ideas, make the students enjoyed the activity, and beneficial for learning English. Last but not least, free writing increase the students speed of writing and flow of thought. Moreover, it increase students' writing fluency, improve students' writing confidence. Based on all the contribution of free writing above, This implies that free writing is effective and useful technique for improving writing skill.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alsowat, H.H. (2017). A Systematic Review of Research on Teaching English Skill for Saudi EFL Students. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 8(5): 31-45
- Bello, T. (1997). "Writing topics for adult ESL students." Paper presented at the 31st Annual Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Convention, Orlando, FL.
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principle: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy, Second Edition*. San Francisco: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Dunifa, L., Ahiri, J., and Karno, E. (2017). The Quality of University Students' Writing Under Free Writing Technique. *European Centre for Research Training and Development UK*. Vol. 5, No. 6, pp.81-90
- Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing With Power: Technique for Mastering the Writing Process, 2nd ed.* Oxford: Oxford Univ Press.
- Hwang, J. (2010). A case study the influence of freewriting on writing fluency and confidence of EFL college-level students. *University of Hawaii Second Language Studies Paper* 28 (2).
- John, D. (2019). Free Writing' versus 'Writing Fluency. *The Journal Of Asia TEFL*. Vol. 16, No. 1.
- Li, L. Y. (2007). Exploring the use of focused freewriting in developing academic writing. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 4(1), 5.
- Fernandez, F, T. Martín, R,H, García, P, F. J.& Merlo-Vega, J. A. (2016). The Systematic Review of Literature in LIS: An approach. In F. J. García-Peñalvo (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Technological Ecosystems for Enhancing Multiculturality (TEEM'16) (Salamanca, Spain, November 2-4, 2016)* (pp. 291-298). New York, NY, USA: ACM. doi:10.1145/3012430.3012531
- Ramdhani, A., Muhammad, A, R., Abdusy, S, A. (2014). Writing a Literature Review Research Paper: A step-by-step approach. *Insan Akademika Publications*. P-ISSN: 2301- 4458; E-ISSN: 2301-8038.
- Richards, J.C., and Renandya, W. A.. 2002. *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenberg, Vivian M. (1989) *Reading, Writing and Thinking*. New York: Random House.
- Shiobara. (2014). Increases in Writing Fluency through Free-Writing Journals. *Journal of the Faculty of Letters, Kobe Shoin Women's University*. Vol. 3 ,63-73.

Tussupbekova, M., & Enders, P. (2015). Applying Freewriting as a Technique for Developing Kazakhstani University Students' Writing Skills in English. *The Social Sciences*, 10(6), 1193-1199.